

SOCIALISM - 1

63

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SOCIALISM

AND THE

WORKING MAN

BY

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SOCIALISM AND THE WORKING MAN.

IN many parts of Dublin, especially in the outskirts of the city, and probably, too, in other cities of Ireland, notices were not unfrequently to be seen, some years ago to the following effect, written or printed on walls or hoardings by the roadway :—

- “ Socialism not opposed to Religion,”
- “ Socialism the only hope for the working man,”
- “ Work for all under Socialism,”
- “ Socialism true Liberty,”

and similar legends. Despite these attractive announcements the Socialist propaganda has been, and probably always will be, largely a failure in Ireland. The deep religious feeling and, perhaps still more, the sound common sense of our Catholic population is a considerable safeguard against the insidious advances of this latest importation from across the Channel. Yet in every body of men, even among our own Catholic people, there will naturally be found a certain small percentage of, shall I say, fools?—persons at any rate silly and simple enough to give some measure of belief to these and similar statements so persistently forced upon their attention, both in print and by word of mouth. It may, therefore, be useful to address some few words of instruction to the reader regarding the nature, aims, and effects of Socialism. I shall endeavour very briefly to answer the following questions, suggested by the notices I have spoken of above :—

1. What is Socialism ?
2. Is Socialism opposed to Religion ?
3. Does Socialism offer any real redress to the working man ?
4. Does Socialism lead to true liberty ?

CHAPTER I.

WHAT IS SOCIALISM ?

Socialism, like a great many other loud-sounding "isms," is, even in the minds of its own warmest advocates, a rather vague sort of term, susceptible of many meanings and many degrees of intensity. It is one of those convenient names that may be applied to a host of different things. "Socialism," says Father Rickaby, S.J., "carried to an extreme, involves a transfer, sudden and probably violent, of all capital to the State, and that apparently without compensation to the sufferers by the change." "Socialism thus carried out," continues the same writer, "means a posture of affairs in which a government of sheer democracy, just such as was proposed by Jean Jacques Rousseau, keeps in its own hands the whole of the capital, or producer's wealth, of the country. . . . The people collectively is sole proprietor, not of all the wealth of the country, but of all the wealth that may lawfully be employed for producing other wealth by means of buying and selling, and other contracts. A man, thus, may own the home he lives in, the coat upon his back, even the garden that grows cabbages for his table ; but he may not hire hands to cultivate the garden and then sell the produce, he may not build houses and rent them. The State will be sole landlord, sole manufacturer, sole owner of shipping and railroads, and all branches of the carrying trade, sole exploiter of mines, sole practitioner of medicine, sole merchant and sole retail dealer—in a word, sole capitalist. The only way to wealth for the individual will be his own personal labour ; he will get nothing but the wages of his work. The utmost vigilance will be exercised to prevent his capitalising his wages ; they are given him to consume, not to produce with. He may produce for himself if he can, but not for the market." How all this is to come about is not very clear. "No working drawing, so to speak, of Socialism has yet been made by its architects. And yet some of them are

bold enough to cry out for the demolition, sudden, violent, and total, of the present edifice of civilisation. Before a man consents to have his house tumbled about his ears, he may well insist upon inspecting precise and accurate plans of the new palace into which he is invited to migrate." Here is the plan proposed by some: "Whatever the labour may be, some Socialists propose that the doers of it form a gild, and that gild will have the monopoly in its own sphere—thus . . . a tailor's gild . . . a physicians' gild, a schoolmasters' gild. The maker of a coat, then, will take his article to the gild stores, and receive his pay thence, if he be one of the fraternity; otherwise he will not be authorised to make coats, except, if he chooses, for his own back. The gild will sell the coat. . . . but the surgeon and the schoolmaster have no work to take to their gild: who, then, shall remunerate them?" They cannot pocket their fee according to the usual practice. "It appears that the patient or the pupil must carry his fee to the gild of physicians or the guild of preceptors, and the gild will pay their man for doing so many days' work." Thus everyone must buy what he wants from the State or from some gild over which the State exercises absolute control.

The Bases on which Socialism rests. are ably summed up in the words of an anonymous writer in the *Quarterly Review*.

Socialism, according to this writer, has for "its philosophical basis pure materialism; its religious basis is pure negation; its ethical basis that Society makes the individuals of which it is composed, not the individuals Society, and that, therefore, the structure of Society determines individual conduct, which involves moral responsibility; its economic basis is the theory that labour is the sole producer, and that capital is the surplus value over bare subsistence produced by labour and stolen by capitalists; its juristic basis is the right of labour to the whole product; its historical basis is the industrial revolution, that is the change from small and handicraft methods of production to large and mechanical ones,

and the warfare of classes ; its political basis is democracy. . . . It may be noted that some of these [bases] have already been abandoned and are in ruins, others are beginning to shake ; and as the process advances the defenders are compelled to retreat and take up fresh positions. Thus the form of the doctrine changes and undergoes modification, though all cling still to the central principle, which is the substitution of public for private ownership."

Socialism to be successful should embrace the entire world. Otherwise capitalists would transfer their wealth to countries where private capital was still allowed. Some State, too, might find it advantageous to keep apart from the Socialist movement, and thus grow rich at their neighbours' expense.

Such a condition of things, it is clear, could never be realised, and if it were, the Socialist State, given the actual conditions of human nature, would, in all human probability, be rather a pandemonium than a paradise, a hell on earth more than a heaven.

One of the keenest intellects that ever lived, no less a man than the pagan philosopher Aristotle, uttered, more than two thousand years ago, the following vigorous condemnation of the Socialist creed :—

" This style of legislation wears a good face and an air of philanthropy. No sooner is it heard than it is eagerly embraced, under the expectation of a marvellous love to grow out from it between man and man, especially if the proposer goes on to inveigh against the evils of existing institutions, setting all down to the want of a community of goods. These evils, however, are due, not to the want of a community of property, but to the depravity of human nature. For experience teaches that disputes are far more likely to occur among people who possess property in common and live as partners, than among those who hold their estates in separate tenure. The life proposed appears to be altogether impossible " (Aristotle, *Politics*, ii., 5).

CHAPTER II.

IS SOCIALISM OPPOSED TO RELIGION ?

BY "religion" I mean chiefly the Catholic religion and its tenets. To the question, "Is Socialism opposed to Religion?" I shall let the present Pope give an answer. Pius X. speaks of "Socialism, which, *breathing hatred of Christianity*, advances with ruin in its train—*blotting out the hopes of heaven from the hearts of the people*—to *destroy the fabric of Society*, already shaken." We shall learn from the Socialists themselves how far these statements are correct.

Mr. Blatchford, a professed champion of Socialism of the cause of Socialism, writes in *God and my Neighbour*: "I am working for Socialism when I attack a religion which is hindering Socialism"; and he declares, "I do not like the Catholic Church"; "The Church was the enemy of popular freedom, the enemy of popular education: the friend of superstition and tyranny and the robber"; and again: "I cannot believe in the existence of Jesus Christ"; and elsewhere: "There is no such thing as sin." Karl Marx, the father of modern Socialism, tells us that "Religion is an absurd popular sentiment, a fantastic degradation of human nature."

Again, Mr. Hyndman, one of the leading spirits of the Social Democratic Federation, in a speech at Holborn Town Hall, asserted that, to all intents and purposes, Christianity is the Catholic Church, and that *it is against the Catholic Church that the main fight of the future must be waged*.

The German founders of Socialism, Marx, Engels, Lassalle, were notoriously anti-Christian. Its more modern exponents in Germany, Bebel, Leibnicht, Bernstein, and the rest, as well as its popular newspapers the *Sozial Demokrat*, the *Vorwärts*, the *Neue Zeit*, etc., are equally opposed to Christianity. In France it is the same. Its numerous writers and exponents, and its journals, such as *La Guerre Sociale*, *L'Humanité*,

Le Socialist, etc., are all unanimously opposed to all revealed religion. In Italy, Austria, Spain, Russia, Switzerland, Socialism and hatred of religion go together.

No wonder that Count Soderini should declare, in his denunciation of Socialism, that: "It is a noteworthy fact that there is scarcely a speech or demonstration made by Socialists in which they have abstained from making hostile utterances against God and against Christianity. . . . They have done all in their power to manifest . . . absolute hatred of every form of religion, and Socialism and impiety for them go hand in hand."

Next, "Socialism blots out the hopes of heaven from the hearts of the people," says Pius X. Let us learn from the Socialists how far this statement is true.

Writes Karl Marx, the conviction that "*to die is to end all here will impel everyone to lead a natural life.*" Here, too, is the declaration of a recent Socialist Congress: "We shall have the delight of assisting at the agony of the priests, prostrated in the gutters of the streets. They shall pine away of hunger, slowly, fearfully, before our eyes. This shall be our revenge, and for the relish of such a revenge, accompanied by a bottle of Bordeaux, *we will willingly sell our place in heaven.* What say we? Heaven? *We want it not.* What we wish for is hell—hell, with all the delights that precede it, and *we leave heaven to the God of the Papist*" (applause). And yet "Socialism is not opposed to religion" say the placards I spoke of in the last chapter.

1. An admitted principle of Socialism asserts that religion is not only distinct, but entirely separate, from politics and the welfare of the State. In virtue of this principle, Socialists claim an absolute and complete divorce between religion and the State, and maintain that the two are in no way connected. It is clear that all this is a direct contradiction, not merely of the Catholic religion, but of all true Christianity. Religion must exist side by side with the State. Christianity must be its animating and in-

Socialist

principles opposed to Religion.

spiring principle, the soul, so to speak, of the body politic. You cannot separate them into water-tight compartments, and say, 'Here is Religion,' and 'Here is the State.' Christ Himself has said: "He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who soweth not with Me scattereth."

2. Another principle of Socialism is the perfect equality of all men. No doubt, in the eyes of God, and with respect to Him, all men, by their nature and divine adoption, are essentially equal; but with respect to each other there are, and must be, grades or accidental inequalities of dignity, and power, and wealth, and authority, implying due subjection of subject to ruler, and children to parents, and servant to master, and so forth. The subversion of these various relations, which is the professed aim of Socialism, would of necessity lead to "the destruction of the fabric of Society" spoken of by Pius X.

3. Again, Socialism condemns, beyond a certain very limited degree, all private ownership of property and the right to possess wealth. It would lay forcible hands on land and all forms of capital. The rich would be deprived of their goods, and wholesale public robbery, without compensation, would be sanctioned by law. We know, indeed, that Christ loved and approved of poverty: "Blessed are the poor in spirit," He said. He was the true friend of the poor; and His Church has always tenderly loved and cherished the poor. But He also recognised and sanctioned, and so, too, has the Church, the rights of individual ownership, and that, in the nature of things, some must be possessed of riches and others deprived of them. Hence Socialism, in condemning all "rents," "profits," and "interest" as "theft" and "robbery," is clearly in antagonism with the teachings of Christ and His Church.

**Socialism
destroys the
fabric of
Society.**

The third assertion of Pius X. is that Socialism "destroys the fabric of Society." The well-being of Society very largely depends on the well-being of the Family, which, in its turn, depends on the unity and indissolubility of the Marriage-tie.

To both of these factors in the well-being of human Society Socialism is antagonistic.

**Socialism
antagonistic to
the well-being
of the Family.** 1. Socialism, by denying the right of private ownership of property, deprives the parents of the means of educating or even supporting their children, to say nothing of providing them with a proper maintenance for their future life.

2. Due subordination of children to their parents is essential to the well-being of the family. Socialism destroys this subordination, as we have seen. It tells the children that they are on a footing of perfect equality with their father and mother, and therefore not bound to obey and respect them.

3. Socialism merges the individuality of the family in that of the State. In short, the State is the one great collective family, it substitutes itself for the father and mother and relieves them of their duties and responsibilities, which it undertakes to discharge itself.

**Socialism
destructive
of Marriage.** The Socialistic State undertakes the bringing up and education of the children, and therefore withdraws them from the control of the parents. It thus sweeps away the chief basis upon which the unity and indissolubility of the marriage-tie depend. Thus, the chief duty of parents, for the discharge of which marriage was instituted, ceases, and the beautiful organisation of the Christian family and of the Christian home is abolished to give place to an absurd and practically impossible condition of things.

The question here arises, are Catholics who become Socialists excommunicated like those who join the Free-masons. To this question the distinguished moral theologian, Lehmkuhl, answers as follows: "There is no manner of doubt that the impious sect of Socialists are included [in the excommunication], at least those who profess that if they had the power they would not shrink from completely overthrowing, even by force, the structure of Civil Society as it exists

**Do Catholics be-
coming S ocialists
incur excommu-
nication like
Freemasons?**

to-day. Nay more, those who are imbued with Socialistic principles must be looked upon as heretics and apostates, excommunicated with an excommunication specially reserved [to the Pope]" (Lehmkuhl, *Moral Theology*, vol. ii. n. 950).

Another very eminent moral theologian, Genicot, writing of the excommunication of Freemasons and Carbonari, asserts that Socialists fall under the same condemnation of the Church. "The same," he writes, "is to be said of those who belong to or favour Socialist associations, if conscious of the object of which this impious sect makes profession, of entirely overthrowing both Church and State. However, where the Socialists constitute not merely a society but also a political party, as is now the case in Belgium and many other places, many of its supporters or members are saved from incurring excommunication owing to their ignorance of the objects of this sect, or at least through ignorance of the censure attaching to it. But diligent care must be taken to avoid the proximate danger to Christian faith and morals that threatens such as frequent these assemblies, of which danger they should certainly be warned who imprudently mix themselves up with such associations" (Genicot, *Moral Theology*, vol. ii., n. 596).*

I will conclude this portion of the subject with the words of an able writer on the subject.† "In practice it [Socialism] has upon every opportunity and in every country shown itself a bitter opponent of Catholic Christianity; in doctrine all its most famous leaders are not merely atheistic, as individuals of any party may be, but hold

* It must, however, be borne in mind that, in the first place these are merely the opinions of individual theologians; and, secondly, that the first writer limits his condemnation to those "who profess that if they had the power they would not shrink from completely overthrowing, even by force, the structure of Civil Society as it exists to day," or who are "imbued with such principles"; while the second speaks only of such as are "conscious of the object of which this impious sect makes profession," as he assumes, "of entirely overthrowing both Church and State."

† Husslein, *The Church and Social Problems*, p. 159.

that Socialism itself is incompatible with Christianity as it is taught in the Catholic Church."

From all this it is quite plain that any sort of trifling on the part of Catholics with Socialist* tenets or associations is, to say the least of it, dangerous to faith and morals, and exposes them to the peril of losing their immortal souls.

CHAPTER III.

DOES SOCIALISM OFFER ANY REAL REDRESS TO THE WORKING MAN ? ARGUMENTS AND ANSWERS.

IN the last chapter we saw that Socialism, as it exists in the minds of most of its adherents, is opposed to the tenets of the Catholic Church. I shall now proceed to answer the question, "*Does Socialism offer any real redress to the working man?*"

In this connexion *three chief arguments* are adduced in favour of Socialism.

Socialists. The *first argument* may be called the *argument from justice*, and may be put as follows:—All men are equal, and as such should start in life on a footing of equality. It is unfair that, owing to mere accident of birth, and without any merit of his own, one man should occupy a high station and be possessed of a superabundance of the good things of this world, whilst his neighbour, who is perhaps a better man than he is, is born to a life of toil, poverty, and, perhaps, at times, privation of even the very necessities of life.

The *second argument*, which may be termed the *argument from economy*, is this:—The present system of utilising the results of labour is most uneconomic. Vast

* Obviously I use the word *Socialist* here in the sense in which I have treated of it in this chapter. I do not venture to pass judgment on those who choose to call themselves "Christian Socialists."

sums are spent, for example, on advertising, on the paying of commercial travellers, on wasteful methods of delivering goods, in a word, on bringing manufactured articles to the notice, or within the reach, of purchasers. This is labour wasted. All this might be obviated by *Collectivism*.

The *third argument* is seemingly the most cogent, the *argument*, namely, *from necessity*. It may be stated thus:—The present condition of affairs is simply intolerable. Thousands of people are almost dying of starvation, ill-housed, ill-clad, without employment; even those who have employment are often over-worked and under-paid. Socialism is the only remedy.

First Argument.—“All men are equal.”

Answers to these arguments. In the eyes of God and in the essential dignity of man all men undoubtedly *are* equal. Prince and peasant, noble and plebeian, all are equal in God's eyes.

Human nature is the same in all. All Christians are children of God and heirs to the same heaven. This is the teaching of the Church itself, which, in its sacred ministrations, treats all men alike. But the Church, following the example of its Divine Founder, recognises, nay, enforces, inequality of rights and of authority, the duty of obedience to superiors, of submission to lawfully constituted authority, the rights of ownership and so forth. Neither Christ nor His Church have ever preached the levelling down of ranks, or the overthrow of rule. It is and ever must be in the nature of things that, *as regards this world*, some shall be born rich, some poor, some destined for a life of poverty and labour, others for comparative affluence and ease. Some are born to rule and some to serve. All are actors on the stage of life. Who does his part the best is noblest, be he prince or peasant. At the great accounting day it may be found that lowliness and poverty and suffering in this world were a better asset for eternity than the gilded life of worldly prosperity. Poverty and suffering were the chosen portion of the Man-God, and the choicest gifts bestowed on His own Blessed Mother and so many saints.

And from a purely human point of view I would ask the prosperous English Socialist, "Are you ready, my good friend, to put yourself on a level with the Hindoo or the Chinaman, whose yearly income averages £2 a head?" I would demand of the Socialist of the United States, "Are you ready to throw in your lot with the ten million negroes of the South? According to your own assertion *all men are equal.*" Are the men of science and the men of parts and education ready to start fair with every lazy vagabond in the streets? And suppose they did, how long do you think that this unnatural equality would last? In the race of life some must out-distance others. All have not the same talents, energy, or capabilities. It must inevitably result in the "survival of the fittest." Some will sink and some will rise, according to the diversity of their inherent powers. And so, do what you will, there must be inequality.

Second Argument.—The present system is most un-economic. Collectivism is the only remedy. This argument is answered crushingly in the monumental work of Father Cathrein and in the English translation with additions by the American Jesuit, Father Gettelman. Collectivism presents five fatal difficulties.

i. First comes the difficulty of *organisation*. Suppose for a moment the task of providing and apportioning labour in these countries to be vested in the hands of the British Government. The first thing that would have to be done would be to establish a large board of officials to take the place of the present employees. It would be impossible to estimate the magnitude of this official bureau with its vast network of dependencies scattered over the entire country. These men would have to be paid for their services. This, so far from being more economic, would be immeasurably more expensive than the present system. It would be impossible to maintain the proposed equality. Town would outstrip town, and district district in the commercial race. No one could leave his own district without a special permit from the government, for fear of disorganising the relations between demand and

supply. These are but a few of the difficulties that would arise under this single head of *organisation*.

2. Next comes the difficulty of *supply*. There being no competition, the board of public providers would not be in the least solicitous, as traders are, to meet the peculiar needs of individual consumers. There would be a fixed standard of production. The consumer would have to take what [he got, and be satisfied with it] as best he might. This were little short of slavery.

3. The third difficulty regards *employment*. A boot-maker might be put to bake bread or a baker to make boots, to the manifest discomfort of the public. It would in practice be impossible to give freedom in the choice of occupation.

4. The fourth difficulty is that of *wages*. Either all should receive the same wages, skilled and unskilled, doctor and mason and plumber, share and share alike, to the certain destruction of all enterprise and the discouragement of all intelligence and skill, or else discrimination should be exercised, and some receive more, some less. In the latter case, as there could be no outside standard of wages, and no trades unions to insist on proper pay, the settling of this delicate matter of wages should be left to the tender mercies of the government officials, whose interest it would be to pay as little to the labourers as possible, in order to have more money available for their own salaries. I say nothing of the danger of corruption or of the manifold opportunities afforded by this system for embezzlement and fraud of every kind, practised on the unfortunate labouring man.

5. Lastly comes the difficulty of the *absence of incentive*. As every man would be entitled to his support, there would be no incentive to hard or energetic work, no incentive to enterprise of any kind. Drones and loungers would fatten on the bread of idleness, and the hard-working and the conscientious would be none the better for their toil.

Another answer to the second argument of the Socialists is this, that the present system, whilst favouring a healthy competition, affords employment to

printers, paper makers, commercial travellers, and so forth, and thus fosters industry and trade.

In the next chapter I shall give an answer to the third argument for Socialism set forth above.

CHAPTER IV.

ANSWER TO THE THIRD ARGUMENT: "THE PRESENT CONDITION OF AFFAIRS IS INTOLERABLE. SOCIALISM IS THE ONLY REMEDY."

IN the last chapter I answered two of the principal arguments urged by Socialists in this connexion. A third yet remains, the argument, namely, from necessity, which was stated thus: The present condition of affairs is simply intolerable. Thousands of people are almost dying of starvation, ill-housed, ill-clad, without employment; even those who have employment are often over-worked and under-paid. Socialism is the only remedy.

No one, not even the most ardent Answer to the advocate of Socialism, has more fully third argument. realised the crying needs of large sections of the labouring classes than has the Church, with the Sovereign Pontiff at its head. We need not go outside our own land for proofs of this. In Ireland poverty is chronic and well-nigh universal. The overcrowding of the larger towns; the stagnation of industry and trade, resulting in a corresponding absence of commercial enterprise and consequent lack of employment; the conditions governing the cultivation of the land, such as the vastly undue preponderance of pasture over tillage, the heavy rents for land, prohibitive railway tariff for carriage of goods, difficulty of getting a market for agricultural produce, the poverty and heavy debts oppressing the farmers, the high price of labour, difficulties of climate and so forth; and last, but by no means least, the paralysing influence of foreign competition on our home produce, whether agricultural or manufactured—these and other causes are,

to a great extent, peculiar to Ireland and easily account for the widespread destitution that exists around us. But side by side with that destitution we find in Ireland a most wonderful and almost universal charity, showing itself in the shape of charitable institutions of every kind : orphanages, hospitals, schools, refuges, homes for the aged, the infirm, the dying, to say nothing of the great St. Vincent de Paul Society covering the country with a network of charitable organisations, and all supported by the voluntary contributions of a people who, in their tender and marvellous sympathy with the afflicted poor, actually stint themselves in their own poverty to bring aid to their destitute fellow-men.* This is the sort of Socialism we have here in holy Catholic Ireland—true Christian Socialism, which, in any one of its manifold outlets has done, and is doing, more *really* solid work towards the alleviation of suffering humanity than all the congresses, meetings, and speeches of scientific Socialism the wide world over. This resembles the Socialism of the early Christians, whose goods were all in common, and who were bound by the bonds of tenderest charity. This is a Socialism that brings with it the blessing of God on receiver and on giver alike. Like mercy, “it droppeth, as the gentle rain from heaven upon the place beneath ; it is twice bless'd : it blesseth him that gives and him that takes.”

This, in short, is the Socialism of the Catholic Church, whose mission it has ever been to help the poor and comfort the afflicted. To the poor it preaches patience and loving submission to the holy will of God, reminding them that Christ Himself was poor, and that He proclaimed that *Blessed are the poor*. On the rich it constantly impresses the necessity of charity to those in want, that their riches are but *lent* to them, that they are but the stewards of God's bounty, *bound* to give of their abundance to the poor. “If Christian precepts prevail,” wrote Leo XIII. in his great Encyclical on

* For a detailed list of these charitable institutions see the *Handbook of Catholic Charitable and Social Works in Ireland*, edited by the present writer, published at the Office of the *Irish Messenger of the Sacred Heart*

the *Condition of Labour*, "the two classes [rich and poor] will not only be united in the bonds of friendship, but also in those of brotherly love. For they will understand and feel that *all men are the children of a common father*, that is, of God . . . that *the blessings of nature and the gifts of grace belong in common to the whole human race*, and that to all, except to those who are unworthy, is promised the inheritance of the kingdom of heaven." And elsewhere in the same Encyclical he writes : " Those whom fortune favours are warned that freedom from sorrow and abundance of earthly riches are no guarantee of the beatitude that shall never end, but rather the contrary ; that the rich shall tremble at the threatenings of Jesus Christ . . . and that a most strict account must be given to the Supreme Judge for all that we possess. The chiefest and most excellent rule for the right use of money is one which the heathen philosophers indicated, but which the Church has traced out clearly. . . . It rests on the principle that it is one thing to have a right to the possession of money, and another to have a right to use money as one pleases. Private ownership is the natural right of man ; and to exercise that right, especially as members of Society, is not only lawful but absolutely necessary. *It is lawful*, says St. Thomas of Aquin, *for a man to hold private property, and it is also necessary for the carrying on of human life* (2, 2, Q. 66, Art. 2). But if the question be asked, How should one's possessions be used ? the Church replies without hesitation in the words of the same holy Doctor : *Man must not consider his outward possessions as his own, but as common to all, so as to share them without difficulty when others are in need.* Whence the Apostle saith : *Command the rich of this world . . . to give with ease, to communicate* (ibid., Q. 65, Art. 2)." Here are the true principles of a genuine Christian Socialism as laid down by Leo XIII.

But this great Pope does not by any means confine himself to abstract principles. "The Church," he says, "improves and ameliorates the condition of the working-man by numerous useful organisations ; does its best to enlist the services of all ranks in discussing and en-

deavouring to meet, in the most practical way, the claims of the working-classes ; and acts on the decided view that for these purposes recourse should be had, in due measure and degree, to the help of the law and of State authority " (*Encyclical on the Condition of Labour*).

In the next chapter I will endeavour to place before the reader a brief outline of the remedial measures proposed by Pope Leo XIII. as best calculated to meet in practice the lamentable condition of affairs I have set forth. They are the offspring of a master mind, they differ widely from the wild impracticable dreams of the Socialism of these latter days. They show that modern Socialism is very far, indeed, from being the *only* or in any sense the *true* remedy for the many evils that afflict the working man.

CHAPTER V.

REMEDIES PROPOSED BY LEO XIII.—I. DIFFUSED OWNERSHIP.

As promised in the last chapter I now proceed to place before my readers a brief outline of the remedial measures put forward in the great Encyclical of Leo XIII., *On the Condition of Labour*. These suggestions, emanating from a master mind, offer a practical, statesmanlike solution of a complex and difficult problem. They may be classed under two distinct heads, which may, for clearness' sake, be entitled, *Diffused Ownership* and *Labour Reform*. I shall treat of each separately.

" This great Labour question," writes I.—*Diffused Ownership.* Pope Leo, cannot be solved " except by assuming as a principle that private ownership must be held sacred and inviolable. The law, therefore, should favour ownership, and its policy should be to induce as many of the people as possible to become owners. Many excellent results will follow from this ; and, first of all, property will

become more equitably divided. For the effect of civil change and revolution has been to divide Society into two widely different castes. On the one side there is the party which holds the power because it holds the wealth ; which has in its grasp all labour and all trade ; which manipulates for its own benefit and its own purposes all sources of supply, and which is powerfully represented in the councils of the State itself. On the other hand, there is the needy and powerless multitude, sore and suffering and always ready for disturbance.

" If working men can be encouraged to look forward to obtaining a share in the land, the result will be that the gulf between vast wealth and deep poverty will be bridged over and the two orders will be brought nearer together. Another consequence will be a greater abundance of the fruits of the earth. Men always work harder and more readily when they work on that which is their own ; nay, they learn to love the very soil which yields, in response to the labour of their hands, not only food to eat, but an abundance of good things for themselves, and those that are dear to them. It is evident how much a spirit of willing labour would add to the produce of the earth and to the wealth of the community. And a third advantage would arise from this : men would cling to the country in which they were born ; for no one would exchange his country for a foreign land, if his own afforded him the means of living a tolerable and happy life."

These, assuredly, are golden words. And if they were specially written in view of our peculiar needs and circumstances here in Ireland, they could not be more pointed in their application or more practical. They suggest the extension of peasant proprietorship such as exists, for example, in Belgium, where the population in 1891 was 540 to the square mile, as compared with 144 to the square mile in the same year in Ireland. Travelling through Ireland one cannot fail to be struck by the vast amount of what may be called uninhabited land. If these vast untenanted expanses, instead of being in the hands of great owners and graziers, were portioned out into holdings of from 1 to 20 or 30 acres

a piece, owned and worked by the occupiers and their families, what a different state of things we should have. Families might live on the produce of their holdings, and the overcrowding of the large towns, so productive of destitution and misery, would give place to an agricultural population living under conditions immeasurably more favourable to happiness, health, and prosperity than such as exist in the wretched back slums of our larger cities.

Then, too, might we look for the three great results pointed out by Pope Leo, viz., the "bridging over of the gulf between vast wealth and deep poverty"—a more even division of earthly possessions or the abolition of the extremes of wealth and of poverty; secondly, "a greater abundance of the fruits of the earth," and lastly, a cessation of that emigration which has been depleting the manhood and strength of the land. Such individual ownership would fix the people on the soil, make them thrifty, industrious, home-loving; foster the domestic virtues; raise the general standard of living; in a word, bring the blessings of peace and prosperity back to our island home.

"These three important benefits, however," continues the Pope, "can only be expected on the condition that a man's means be not drained and exhausted by excessive *taxation*. The right to possess private property is from nature, not man; and the State has only the right to regulate its use in the interests of the public good, but by no means to abolish it altogether. The State is, therefore, unjust and cruel if in the name of taxation it deprives the private owners of more than is just."

To these strictures on undue taxation we should be inclined to add the State abolition of railway and certain other monopolies and the introduction of such protective duties as would safeguard home produce against the unfair encroachment of foreign goods (whether agricultural or manufactured) into the home market.

In the next chapter I shall set down Pope Leo's suggestions on the still more important question of *Labour Reform*.

CHAPTER VI.

REMEDIES PROPOSED BY LEO XIII. (*continued*)—
II. LABOUR REFORM.

IN the last chapter I called attention to the first of the remedial measures put forward in the great Encyclical of Pope Leo XIII., *On the Condition of Labour*, namely, *Diffused Ownership*. I endeavoured to show how this principle, if applied to Ireland, would of itself be almost enough to solve the problem of securing maintenance for the working population of this country. The *land* is our great national asset. The land for the people, and the people living on the land, and not huddled together in misery and poverty, enormously over-crowding the wretched slums of our larger cities, is, in the belief of many, the true solution of our social problem here at home. It is an unnatural and appalling state of things to see vast tracts of fertile country, capable, if properly distributed and worked, of supporting five or six times their present population, left, comparatively speaking, uninhabited; while thousands are well-nigh dying of starvation in the towns, or seeking in a foreign land the means of sustenance existing, yet denied them, in their own. We are, or ought to be, mainly, an agricultural people. Hence, the movement towards *peasant proprietorship* is a movement in the right direction. "The law," says Leo XIII., "should favour ownership, and its policy should be to induce as many of the people as possible to become owners" (*Encyclical on the Condition of Labour*). This alone, indeed, is not enough. Our people need to be taught how to work the land to the very best advantage, to draw from the soil, to use again the words of Pope Leo, "in response to the labour of their hands, not only food to eat, but an abundance of good things for themselves and those that are dear to them." That this may be done in practice has abundantly been shown in certain parts of Ireland. What has actually been done in one part of the country, and that by no

means the most favoured with the gifts of nature, may assuredly be done in other parts as well.

I now proceed to the special subject of the present chapter—namely, *Labour Reform*. This is the second of the remedial measures put forward in the great Encyclical. The Labour Reforms, as outlined by Pope Leo XIII., may be classed under the three following heads: *Protected Labour*, *Organised Labour*, *Insured Labour*.

1. *Protected Labour*.—This protection

A.—*Protected Labour* should come, in the first instance, from the State. “The first duty of the rulers of the State,” writes Leo XIII., “should be to make sure that the laws and institutions, the general character and administration of the commonwealth, shall be such as to produce of themselves public well-being and private prosperity. . . . Justice demands that the interests of the poorer population be carefully watched over by the Administration, so that they who contribute so largely to the advantage of the community may themselves share in the benefits they create—that being housed, clothed, and enabled to support life, they may find their existence less hard and more endurable. . . . When there is a question of protecting the rights of individuals, the poor and helpless have a claim to special consideration. The richer population have many ways of protecting themselves, and stand less in need of help from the State; those who are badly off have no resources to fall back upon, and must rely chiefly upon the assistance of the State. And it is for this reason that *wage-earners, who are undoubtedly among the weak and necessitous, should be specially cared for and protected by the commonwealth.*”

Further on the Pope writes: “The first concern of all is to save the poor workers from *the cruelty of grasping speculators, who use human beings as mere instruments for making money. It is neither justice nor humanity so to grind men down with excessive labour as to stupefy their minds and wear out their bodies.* . . . Daily labour, therefore, must be so regulated that it may not be protracted during longer hours than strength admits,

... Those who labour in mines and quarries and in work within the bowels of the earth should have shorter hours in proportion as their labour is more severe and more trying to health. . . . Finally, work which is suitable for a strong man cannot reasonably be required from a woman or a child. And, in regard to children, great care should be taken not to place them in workshops and factories until their bodies and minds are sufficiently mature.... Women, again are not suited to certain trades ; for a woman is by nature fitted for home-work, and it is that which is best adapted at once to preserve her modesty and to promote the good bringing up of children and the well-being of the family. As a general principle it may be laid down that a workman ought to have leisure and rest in proportion to the wear and tear of his strength ; for the waste of strength must be repaired by the cessation of work."

Assuredly the most rabid Socialist could feel nothing but gratitude and admiration at these words of the great Pontiff. They are the words of a large-hearted, kindly Christian charity, no less than the dictates of a profound and enlightened statesmanship. They impress on rulers the obligation of protecting the " poor workers from the cruelty of grasping speculators, who use human beings as mere instruments for making money." They demand shorter hours for " those who labour in mines and quarries and in work within the bowels of the earth"—just exactly what the English miners have been very justly demanding. They require that children should not be placed " in workshops and factories till their bodies and minds are sufficiently mature"—precisely the enactment of the British "*Factories Act*." They call attention to the fact that women are unsuited for certain trades, and that the mother's proper sphere of action is in her own home " promoting the good bringing up of her children and the well-being of her family"—just what to-day every sensible and prudent man maintains. Thus we see that Pope Leo XIII. has left behind him in his great Encyclical rules and principles of action the

supreme wisdom of which is growing into fuller recognition every day.

Before leaving the question of *Protected Labour* I should wish to call attention to the Pope's views on the Theory of Wages.

On this thorny question of *Wages, Wages.* Pope Leo's attitude is clear and decided.

The passage in the Encyclical, *On the Condition of Labour*, in which he treats of this subject is so important that I give it in full. Pope Leo writes; "Wages, we are told, are fixed by free consent ; and therefore the employer, when he pays what was agreed upon, has done his part, and is not called upon for anything further. The only way, it is said, in which injustice could happen would be if the master refused to pay the whole of the wages, or the workman would not complete the whole of the work undertaken ; when this happens the State should intervene to see that each obtains his own—but not under any other circumstances."

"This mode of reasoning," continues the Pope, "is by no means convincing to a fair-minded man, for there are important considerations which it leaves out of view altogether. To labour is to exert oneself for the sake of procuring what is necessary for the purposes of life, and most of all for self-preservation. '*In the sweat of thy brow thou shalt eat bread*' (Gen. iii. 19). Therefore a man's labour has two notes or characters. First of all it is *personal*; for the exertion of individual power belongs to the individual who puts it forth, employing his power for that personal profit for which it was given. Secondly, a man's labour is *necessary*: for without the results of labour a man cannot live, and self-preservation is a law of nature which it is wrong to disobey. Now, if we were to consider labour merely as far as it is *personal*, doubtless it would be within the workman's right to accept any rate of wages whatever ; for in the same way as he is free to work or not, so is he free to accept a small remuneration or even none at all. But this is a mere abstract supposition ; the labour of a working man is not only his personal attribute, but

it is *necessary*, and this makes all the difference. The preservation of life is the bounden duty of each and all, and to fail therein is a crime. *It follows that each one has a right to procure what is required in order to live: and the poor can procure it in no other way than by work and wages.*"

"Let it be granted, then," concludes Pope Leo, "that, as a rule, workman and employer should make the agreement, and in particular should freely agree as to wages; nevertheless there is a dictate of nature more imperious and more ancient than any bargain between man and man, that the remuneration must be enough to support the wage-earner in reasonable and frugal comfort. If through necessity, or fear of worse evil, the workman accepts harder conditions because an employer or a contractor will give him no better, he is the victim of force and injustice."

I have italicised these last words, they so fully and fearlessly express all that is just and fair on behalf of the workman. The whole passage is so clear and so splendid a statement of the Theory of Wages that it needs no comment.

I now proceed to consider the second head under which Labour Reform may be promoted—namely, *Organised Labour*.
B.—Organised Labour—Working men's Associations. "Employers and workmen," writes Leo XIII., "may themselves effect much . . . by means of those institutions and organisations . . . which draw the two orders more closely together. . . . The most important of all are Workmen's Associations. . . . Such associations should be adopted to the requirements of the age in which we live—an age of greater instruction, of different customs, and of more numerous requirements in daily life. It is gratifying to know that there are actually in existence not a few societies of this nature, consisting either of workmen alone or of workmen and employers together; but it were greatly to be desired that they should multiply and become more effective."

Here the Pope vindicates the right to form such societies. These societies, "although they exist within

the State and are each a part of the State, nevertheless cannot be prohibited by the State, absolutely as such. For to enter into society of this kind is the natural right of man ; and the State must protect natural rights and not destroy them. . . . There are, no doubt, times when it is right that the law should interfere to prevent associations ; as when men join together for purposes which are evidently bad, unjust, or dangerous to the State. In such cases the public authority may justly forbid the formation of associations, and may dissolve them when they already exist. But every precaution must be taken not to violate the rights of individuals." Here, in passing, the Pope denounces the iriquitous action of a government that, under the pretence of public benefit, drives out of the land the members of religious associations, and robs them of the most elementary rights of citizenship. "Workmen's Associations," he continues, "should be so organised and governed as to furnish the best and most suitable means for attaining what is aimed at, that is to say, for helping each individual member to better his condition to the utmost in body, mind, and property."

Religion must be the foundation of all these Associations : "Let our Associations look first and before all to God. . . . Let the working-man be urged and led to the worship of God, to the earnest practice of religion, and, among other things, to the sanctification of Sundays and festivals. Let him learn to reverence and love Holy Church, the common Mother of us all, and, so, to obey the precepts and to frequent the Sacraments of the Church, those Sacraments being the means ordained by God for obtaining forgiveness of sin and for leading a holy life."

Pope Leo next proceeds to determine the relations of the members of the organisations one to another "in order that they may live together in concord and go on prosperously and successfully." He writes : "The offices and charges of the society should be distributed for the good of the society itself, and in such a manner that difference in degree or position should not interfere with unanimity and goodwill. Office-bearers should be

appointed with prudence and discretion, and each one's charge should be carefully marked out ; thus no member will suffer wrong. Let the common funds be administered with the strictest honesty." To obviate the great suffering and public inconvenience arising from strikes, His Holiness continues : " If it should happen that either a master or a workman deemed himself injured, nothing would be more desirable than that there should be a committee composed of honest and capable men of the Association itself, whose duty it should be, by the laws of the Association, to decide the dispute."

To conclude this portion of my subject, "**Unresigned and irreligious poverty.**" the Pope warns workmen against Associations " in which there exists, in place of charity and love, that intestine strife which always accompanies unresigned and irreligious poverty. Broken in spirit and worn down in body, how many of them would gladly free themselves from this galling slavery ! But human respect, or dread of starvation, makes them afraid to take the step. To such as these, Catholic Associations are of incalculable service, helping them out of their difficulties, inviting them to companionship and receiving the repentant to a shelter in which they may securely trust."

Let us trust and hope that God may ever preserve the Catholic working-men of Ireland from what Pope Leo here terms " unresigned and irreligious poverty"—the poverty, namely, of those who, like so many in England and in other countries, know nothing of the strength and hope and solace that religion—the teaching and example of the Man-God and the prospects of a future life of never-ending bliss—alone is capable of inspiring. Nothing on earth is sadder than the lot of the " unresigned and irreligious " poor, who are deprived of all the good things of this world and have nothing to look forward to in the world to come. For such as these, indeed, Socialism and the final revolt against Society and all existing institutions of our latter-day civilisation are but the natural outcome of wild and unalloyed despair.

C.—Insured Labour.

I now come to the third of the heads under which I have ventured to classify the Labour Reforms of Pope Leo XIII., namely, *Insured Labour*. The Pope writes : “ Employers and workmen may themselves effect much in the matter of which We treat, by means of those institutions and organisations which afford opportune assistance to those in need, and which draw the two orders more closely together. Among them may be enumerated : Societies for mutual help, various foundations established by private persons *for providing for the workman, and for his widow or orphans, in sudden calamity, in sickness, and in the event of death* : and what are called ‘ patronages ’ or institutions for the care of boys and girls, for young people and also for those of more mature years ” (*Encyclical on the Condition of Labour*). And again, speaking of Workmen’s Associations, he says : “ Among the purposes of a society should be to try to *arrange for a continuous supply of work at all times and seasons, and to create a fund from which the members may be helped in their necessities, not only in cases of accident, but also in sickness, old age, and misfortune.* ”

Pope Leo shows how, in the days of the early Christians, similar organisations existed ; how the very poor were assisted by their brethren, and how St. Paul himself undertook “ laborious journeys in order to carry the alms of the faithful to the poorer Christians ” ; and he quotes Tertullian (*Apologia Secunda*, xxxix.) to the effect that these “ deposits of piety,” as they were called, were employed “ *in feeding the needy, in burying them, in the support of boys and girls destitute of means, and deprived of their parents, in the care of the aged and in the relief of the shipwrecked.* ”

Works such as these, so far from having ceased to exist, are now organised and carried out by various religious Orders and Institutes on a scale that far surpasses anything known in the early Christian times. Thus the Church, ever true to her mission, watches with most tender solicitude over the poor and the needy, supplying not merely their spiritual wants, but looking

after the temporal needs of the body as well. We have but to look around in our cities at the multitude of orphanages, free schools, hospitals, refuges, and asylums for young and old, in sickness, abandonment, or disaster, carried on by religious, to realise the all-embracing and tender charity of the Catholic Church.* What a contrast does all this afford to the vapourings and theorisings of our modern Socialists, who talk much and do little, beyond attempting to break down the fabric of Society by imbuing men's minds with false or impracticable ideals, or suggesting Utopias that never have been, and never will be, realised.

CHAPTER VII.

SOCIALISM AND LIBERTY.

I now come to the relations between Socialism and Liberty. This, it may be remembered, is the fourth head under which, at the outset, I proposed to treat the Socialist question.

There is scarcely a word in the whole vocabulary of human thought whose meaning has been more grossly perverted and abused than the word "Liberty." It was one of the great watchwords of the French Revolution : "Liberty, Fraternity, and Equality." Its latter-day manifestations in France are scarcely in keeping with the ordinarily accepted meaning of the word. As we all know, they consist in either driving into exile or else ostracising from public life or penalising all such "free citizens of the Republic," whether religious, politicians, soldiers, or men of other professions, as shall presume to exercise the most elementary rights of freedom in a direction opposed to the peculiar views of the so-called Republican Government. The so-called Republic recently established in Portugal also presents a striking object-lesson to the world of what our modern revolutionists understand by "Liberty."

*See the *Handbook of Catholic Social and Charitable Works in Ireland*, already referred to.

To go back to the earliest beginnings of our race, it was in the name of liberty of action that Satan wrought the ruin of mankind.

Liberty is the sublime gift of the Creator. So much does even God Himself respect our human liberty that He will never force it. Every intelligent being is free by virtue of his understanding and will. The brute creation is not free, because it is without the gift of reason. It cannot go against its animal instinct. Accurately speaking, liberty is not the power of choosing, but the power of willing under the influence of reason.

God alone is essentially and absolutely free. Man's understanding is imperfect, he is liable to error, he is under the subtle sway of many adverse influences that weaken or pervert the will. In so far as he is guided by these influences he allows himself to be bereft of liberty. The imperfection of his liberty consists in his ability to embrace evil or to follow error; in other words, to choose what is really to his detriment. This is clearly a defect. God cannot choose between good and evil. In proportion as man assimilates himself to God, in this respect, in so far does he become possessed of liberty. Hence, to disobey God's law, to sin, is not an exercise of liberty, but a deliberate rejection of it, in order to become a slave of passion or of sensual desire, and thereby assume the most tyrannical of yokes, that of our sworn and malicious enemy, the devil. Therefore St. Thomas, speaking of the words of Christ, "Whoever committeth sin is the servant of sin" (John viii. 34), says: "Everything is that which belongs to it naturally. When, therefore, it acts through a power outside itself, it does not act of itself, but through another, that is, as a slave. But man is by nature rational. When, therefore, he acts according to reason, he acts of himself and according to his free will; and this is liberty. Whereas, when he sins, he acts in opposition to reason, is moved by another, is the victim of misapprehension."

Now, men, to be truly free, must be restrained from doing evil, as a lunatic is restrained from injuring himself. "Without this," says Leo XIII. "the freedom

of our will would be our ruin." This restraint is put upon us by the grace of God and by laws, whether human or divine, the former necessarily based upon the latter.

Hence liberty or freedom is the power of doing what is *right*, not what is *pleasing* at the moment.

Now, the Church has ever been the champion of this liberty. It has ever been the champion of the *truth*, and "the truth shall make you free" (John viii. 32). The Church has abolished slavery, resisted tyranny, protected the defenceless, preached obedience to lawful authority. In a word, the Church is the great bulwark of "the freedom wherewith Christ has made us free" (Gal. iv. 31). That freedom no one can deprive us of. Men or governments may imprison, torture, kill my body, they can never deprive me of such freedom. I obey God alone and [the authority that] comes [from] God, and no one can ever force me to do otherwise.

For there is no authority on earth but that which ultimately comes from God. Hence, such phrases as the "sovereignty of the people," "the supreme will and authority of the people," and so forth, if used in the sense that the people possess this sovereign authority of themselves *independently of God*, are nonsensical and meaningless. All that the people, as such, can do, is to select one or more persons who shall be the depository of God's authority, derived through them. They cannot give what they have not themselves got, the power of independent and supreme authority apart from God.

It is not hard to see how all this completely cuts the ground from under the absurd theories of the Socialists. Their great *thesis* is the inalienable supremacy of the people, absolutely independent of all else. They ignore God. In their view the people are the one and only ultimate court of appeal. Their word is law. They are the ultimate depository of all authority on earth. God is left out of view entirely. All this is false. Apart from God and independently of Him, the people have no authority whatever. At most they are the channel through which His supreme authority devolves upon His representatives on earth. They can, as I have said,

choose one or more persons who shall be the visible depository of God's supreme authority.

Moreover, this authority, in whatsoever hands it may be deposited, is always and under all circumstances *subordinate* to the everlasting and unchangeable laws of right and wrong, i.e., to God. It is therefore *never* independent of God and of His law.

To cast aside God's sovereignty, to emancipate mankind from obedience to His laws is not to proclaim the reign of freedom but to put license in the place of liberty.

Again, man is not free to worship God as he pleases. He is not free to choose any religion he likes. God has established one form of religion, and one only, to which all must belong. There is no such thing as liberty of worship.

Another species of liberty claimed by the world nowadays is liberty of thought and speech, as represented in the public Press. A modern Catholic writer* has characterised most modern literature as "dirt, doubt, and despair." Another, a novelist and a non-Catholic,† speaks of the modern play as nothing but "snivel, drivel, and devil." An American Bishop, Dr. Spalding, says that "this half-mental, half-bestial brothel-and-grog mixture, brought from the great cities to every household, falls like a mildew upon the mind and conscience of the people, taking from them all relish for literature, all belief in virtue, all reverence for God and nature, until one may doubt whether we have not lost the power of intellectual and moral growth" (Spalding, *Socialism and Labour*).

From liberty such as this, and from such similar imported "blessings" coming in the train of English and Continental Socialism, let us hope and pray that Catholic Ireland may ever remain free.

* Father Tabb.

† The Jewish writer Zangwill.

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